

The Honourable Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid
Minister of Health BC
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

November 1, 2012

Dear Madame Minister:

I am writing on behalf of all the Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) of British Columbia, who have worked tirelessly in the health authorities in their efforts to protect the health of British Columbians. The Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) – BC Branch has serious concerns on the increasing wage disparity amongst the provinces and the health authority restrictions on the education opportunities EHOs entitled under the collective agreements.

The CIPHI is the only recognized professional organization that certifies Canadian Environmental Public Health Professionals, advocates for environmental public health issues, advances the profession by providing quality training opportunities, and develops and maintains reliable high standards of professional conduct through its code of ethics and competencies. We have been safe-guarding environmental public health in Canada for almost 100 years.

Our EHOs/PHIs in British Columbia are responsible for similar work duties as those in other provinces. Communicable disease prevention, food safety, drinking water safety, recreational water safety, air quality, land use, tobacco control, emergency response, and emerging environmental public health initiatives are identified duties carried out by EHO's/PHI's throughout Canada. Despite our equivalent duties, skills, training, and competencies, the hourly salary rates of regular and senior EHOs/PHIs in British Columbia are one of the lowest amongst the provinces in Canada (see enclosures). The last collective agreement signed in 2010 entailed two years of zero percent rate increase, which has already widened the disparity amongst the provinces. It has decreased the competitiveness of the EHO/PHI positions in BC, and negatively affects our ability to attract and retain staff. New health initiatives developed by the government of BC have increased expectations from British Columbians regarding safe water supplies, safe nutritional food and healthy community environments to name a few. EHOs and PHIs are concerned that these increased expectations have not been adequately resourced with both staffing resources and reasonable wage compensation. We further feel that this lack of recognition demonstrates a lack of respect for the important work we conduct daily and for the amount of time our members dedicate to advancing our competencies.

In 2011, CIPHI implemented the Continuing Professional Competencies (CPC) Program, which unifies the professional standards of EHOs/PHIs across Canada. CIPHI members have committed to a code of ethics that guides our professional conduct and practice, and to participate in ongoing professional development in our efforts to maintain discipline specific competencies in environmental public health. In 2010, the CIPHI Constitution and Bylaws was amended to require participation in the CPC program commencing January 1, 2011. Furthermore, section 63 of the BC Public Health Act specifically outlines that *'the minister may establish standards of practice for EHOs in relation to the exercise of their powers and performance of their duties under the Act.'* CIPHI BC Branch has been the leader of providing quality education conferences and workshops to EHOs in BC for many years. We recently had to cancel our annual education conference due to unprecedented low participation rates from a health authority due to a budgetary freeze on any

education expenses. There has been further indication from other health authorities that their abilities to support participation at next year's 2013 education conference are anticipated to be challenged as well. CIPHI BC Branch and EHOs/PHIs in BC are increasingly concerned that this budgetary freeze will continue jeopardizing EHOs/PHIs participation in future education opportunities. We believe that continuing education of EHOs should not be at the ransom for the employers in achieving year-end fiscal balance. Therefore, CIPHI BC Branch urges the removal of the clause under section 17.02(d) of the Provincial Agreement between Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association and Health Employers Association of BC pertaining to paying leave and reasonable expenses associated with education **subject to budgetary and operational restraints** from the employers, so that EHOs/PHIs can participate in ongoing education using the funding we feel they should be entitled to. We encourage revisions to the collective agreement identifying ongoing education needs as a priority, and further encourage that the health authorities develop consistent and fair policies to ensure that the needs of employees, and the employers are defined with clearly understood expectations relating to access to ongoing education and funding.

On behalf of CIPHI – BC Branch, I urge the employers and the bargaining committee to give serious consideration to raising the salary rates of regular and senior EHOs/PHIs in British Columbia to a level that is competitive to the rates of our colleagues in other provinces of Canada, and to removing the education restrictions that EHOs/PHIs deserve in meeting our Program and legislative requirements.

I welcome any opportunity to discuss further on this subject matter. Do not hesitate to contact me at (604) 233-3217 or e-mail at president@ciphi.bc.ca if you require further information.

Yours truly,



Gary Tam
CIPHI BC Branch President

cc:

Dr. Perry Kendall – Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia
Ms. Jeanne Meyers - Chief Negotiator, Health Sciences Professional Bargaining Association
Mr. Reid Johnson – HSA of BC President
Mr. Paul Faoro – CUPE 15 President
Mr. Justin Schmid – CUPE National Representative
Mr. Christopher Losito – Environmental Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority/CUPE Representative to the HSPBA Bargaining Committee
Mr. Michael McKinley – Environmental Health Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority/CUPE Representative to the HSPBA Bargaining Committee
Mr. Darryl Walker – BCGEU President
Mr. Steve Pope – Chair of Health Science Professional in BCGEU
Mr. Dave Cherry – Environmental Health Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority/BCGEU Representative to the HSPBA Bargaining Committee

Salary Rates for Regular Environmental Health Officers

Provinces/Employers	Union Names	Step 1 (hourly)	Maximum Step (Hourly)	Collective Agreement Expiry Date
British Columbia	CUPE/BCGEU	\$ 27.18	\$ 33.88	March 31, 2012
Alberta	HSAA	\$ 31.60	\$ 43.72	Expired on March 31, 2011
Saskatchewan	HSAS	\$ 32.23	\$ 39.33	March 31, 2013
Manitoba	MGEU	\$ 24.11	\$ 32.82	March 31, 2014
Ontario (Toronto Area)	N/A	\$ 37.16	\$ 40.73	March 31, 2012
Quebec	PSAC	\$ 32.78	\$ 39.88	Expired in June, 2011
New Brunswick	The New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees	\$ 27.79	\$ 34.95	Expired on Nov 10, 2010
Nova Scotia - Department of Agriculture	Nova Scotia Civil Service Master Agreement	\$ 29.94	\$ 36.53	March 31, 2012
Nova Scotia - Department of Health & Wellness	Nova Scotia Civil Service Master Agreement	\$ 35.05	\$ 41.17	March 31, 2012
Newfoundland and Labrador	NAPE	\$ 31.65	\$ 35.31	March 31, 2012
Prince Edward Island	PEI Union of Public Sector Employees	\$ 23.31	\$ 29.16	March 31, 2013
Federal Government of Canada	PSAC	\$ 32.78	\$ 39.88	Expired in June, 2011

Salary Rates for Senior Environmental Health Officers

Provinces/Employers	Union Name	Step 1 (hourly)	Maximum Step (Hourly)	Collective Agreement Expiry Date
British Columbia	CUPE/BCGEU	\$ 30.27	\$ 37.76	March 31, 2012
Alberta	HSAA	\$ 38.08	\$ 52.23	Expired on March 31, 2011
Saskatchewan	HSAS	\$ 37.59	\$ 45.88	March 31, 2013
Manitoba	MGEU	\$ 28.55	\$ 39.53	March 31, 2014
Ontario (Toronto Area)	N/A	This position does not exist		March 31, 2012
Quebec	PSAC	\$ 36.06	\$ 43.87	Expired in June, 2011
New Brunswick	The New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees	This position does not exist		Expired on Nov 10, 2010
Nova Scotia - Department of Agriculture	Nova Scotia Civil Service Master Agreement	\$ 35.05	\$ 41.17	March 31, 2012
Nova Scotia - Department of Health & Wellness	Nova Scotia Civil Service Master Agreement	This position does not exist		March 31, 2012
Newfoundland and Labrador	NAPE	\$ 33.76	\$ 37.77	March 31, 2012
Prince Edward Island	PEI Union of Public Sector Employees	\$ 24.51	\$ 30.63	March 31, 2013
Federal Government of Canada	PSAC	\$ 36.06	\$ 43.87	Expired in June, 2011

